December 14, 2015

Dear Families,

As you know, the school implemented a new school-wide database, E-School Core, replacing PowerSchool, to track student academic and financial records. Phase one of this process was implemented in August. You should have received your password and access to the database so that you can track your student's daily attendance, grades and food service bill. As with any new system, there has been a learning curve, but overall we are pleased with the ease of access to student records that this new database affords.

The next phase of the E-School Core implementation, biometric identification, is planned to begin in January 2016 at both campuses. One of the many benefits and efficiencies of employing such a system includes improved accuracy for meal purchases as well as expedited absence and tardy registrations. Instead of manually entering student names into the database we will begin using a finger scan device to track the meals students eat and their attendance.

Because this is a new process, we have created a list of FAQs to aid in your understanding of this system and the due diligence that was done before selecting this system. In addition, this process has been discussed at the Principal's coffee with room parents on December 1 and 2. It will also be discussed at the Conseil d'Ecole meeting on December 16 and will be demonstrated at the PTSO meeting on January 6, 2016.

Below are some FAQ:

What is Biometric Identification?
Biometric identification is an automated method of identifying a person based upon physical characteristics. Our school has selected identiMetrics biometric finger scanning identification software because it is fast, accurate, cost-effective and non-intrusive.

Use of Biometric Identification: Biometric identification in schools for meal purchases, attendance, and in some cases, checking books out of the library, has been in place around the world since in the late 1990's. In the United States, thousands of schools use biometric identification. This system is more secure than school issued ID cards, which can be lost, stolen or used by someone else, or key pads and PIN codes that require a student to remember a PIN or can be used by someone else.

How does finger scanning identification work?
Using a finger scanner, the software scans the fingerprint to create and store individual templates of unique points on the fingerprint that identify each student. This template, not the fingerprint, is stored in the database. When the student scans his or her finger, theimage will go into the system and be converted into a binary code (i.e. encrypted). That code will be linked to your student; thus allowing us to simply and accurately track meals purchased and attendance records.

What about my student's privacy?
The software scans the finger for identification. It does not store a copy of the fingerprints. Instead, the software creates a template of the unique fingerprint characteristics. These templates are stored in the school's database with the same high level of security of all of your student's records. When your student graduates or is no longer enrolled at Académie Lafayette, the templates are deleted. **At no time is a fingerprint image stored.** No fingerprints can be recreated or delivered to any agency - governmental or otherwise.

Implementation:
We plan to conduct student finger scanning by the end of January. The new system should be in place and operational in early February 2016.

Location of scanners:
A small scanner will be located at the end of the lunch line at both campuses to quickly scan your student's index finger or thumb when they purchase meals. A similar scanner will be located at the front desk to track students who come in late or who are leaving early. A pass for class will be automatically and quickly printed to ensure that students miss the least amount of class time. This will increase accuracy and greatly reduce the time now required to manually input each student's meal purchase or to record each student who is tardy or leaving early for a medical or other appointment.

Please rest assured that the safety and security of your child and his/her identity is a priority for us and we have evaluated this system with that in mind. Attached for your reference is a more detailed explanation of the process as well as a letter from one of our parents, Charles "Doc" Sade, who has reviewed the system.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Peggy Arians (parians@academielafayette.org) or Jacque Lane (jlane@academielafayette.org). Or you can call the business office at the Oak campus at 816-361-7735.

Sincerely,

Elimane Mbengue
Head of School